

The purpose of adopting Cover Crops is for reducing soil erosion, improving water quality & soil health. Applies to cropland acres where row crops are grown. There are no soil erosion requirements to meet in order to participate. However, we do record this information to capture the erosion benefits of the practice.

Cost share includes 75% on cost of the soil test through SHAC (Soil Health Assessment Center) and an incentive of \$30/ac./yr. for a 1 or 2 species mix and \$40/ac./yr. for 3 or more species mix with a life time maximum total payment of \$20,000 per operator. The district has set a maximum of 200 acres per year per operator.

- Contracted acres must currently be in a minimum of a 2 species production crop rotation. We can help in the eligibility determination.
- Cover crops must be no-tilled or broadcast seeded by either ground or aerial.
- Production crop following cover crops must be planted using No-Till; no tillage used in any field prep.
- All cover crop seedings must be planned with a minimum of 25% cool-season annual grass, small grain component or warm season grass. We can help in this selection process. With legumes, treat seed with appropriate inoculum at planting.
- Spring planted cover crops must have been planted @ least 60 days prior to being terminated.
- Payment can be issued after no-till planting of the production crops into the terminated cover crops or after May 25th if production crop has not yet been planted.
- Cover crops will be terminated as late as practical to maximize plant biomass production & nutrient uptake. Consider timing for next crop & crop insurance requirements.
- Can Not harvest cover crops for grain, seed or hay.
- Can Graze once forages have reached a minimum height of 6-8 in. with enough biomass to justify grazing. Stop grazing once grazed down to 4 in. to ensure adequate soil health benefits. Avoid grazing in real wet soil conditions to avoid severe damage to soil and stand of crops. For fall plantings, grazing typically in the spring before termination.
- If grazing cover crops, choose species suitable for livestock. Be aware of pesticides used in the rotation and effect on livestock consumption. See Herbicide Rotation Restrictions in Forage & C.C. Systems.
- Tillage cannot be used to terminate cover crops. Do not burn cover crop residue.
- Cover Crops will be terminated by frost, mowing, crimping, and/or herbicides in preparation for the following crop; terminate as late as practical maximizing biomass production & nutrient uptake.
- A soil sample for fields for the Initial Standard Soil Health Package Test will be collected prior to planting cover crops; sent in to SHAC in Columbia, MO. A second follow up is encouraged at 4-5 yrs. after implementing cover crops on a field. Instructions are provided.
- Copy of the soil test result or paid invoice from SHAC to verify the submission is required.
- A weight receipt for the seed to verify the pounds of bulk seed applied.

- Reference Appendix 1 for planting zones, dates, winter hardiness, erosion, species best for building organic matter. Cover crop shall be planted as early as possible but prior to final planting date set in Appendix 1 for our planting zone 3. Planting a diverse mix promotes wider diversity of soil organisms; suggested you plant legumes with grasses, brassicas and/or other forbs to provide nitrogen through biological nitrogen fixation. Legumes add the most plant-available N if terminated when about 30% of the crop is in bloom. NRCS Practice Standards are made available to you for your review: Cover Crop 340 & Conservation Crop Rotation 328 standards along with additional handouts to help in establishment and management of your cover crops.